LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

ELPS 431: EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Office Hours: By appointment
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PART I: GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description
Higher education today is faced with the on-going challenge of validating the value-added assumption that students leave college with more knowledge and understanding than when they initially arrived. To maintain their accreditation, colleges and universities must provide empirical evidence that demonstrates how they are achieving their institutional goals and objectives—evidence that moves beyond rhetoric and anecdotally-based reports. Accreditation agencies, such as the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, require that an “organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated” and that “evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.” This course will provide students with the knowledge and understanding of different evaluation frameworks as well as the necessary quantitative and qualitative tools to design valid and reliable evaluation plans. Toward that end, class time and assignments will emphasize how to perform effective, high quality assessment and program evaluations, with a particular focus on assessing student learning within student affairs divisions and other programmatic areas of a college or university.

Course Pedagogy (IMPORTANT)
It is crucial that you understand that this is a practice-oriented course, and as such may be somewhat different to other classes you have attended in the past. The course is built around the design of a program evaluation plan which you will develop during the semester. While you are not expected to implement the evaluation plan, the final product should be a solid, strongly argued proposal which you could confidently pitch to a current or potential employer.

With this in mind, the sessions are built around developing an in-depth understanding of why evaluation is important, how to think about an evaluation problem, and various strategies to approach the different parts of an evaluation plan. You are responsible for considering these various dimensions and determine the most appropriate way to approach your chosen evaluation topic.

My responsibility is to guide and facilitate your learning process. This includes introducing you to the main tenets of evaluation design, providing guidance in terms of content, and most importantly, providing feedback on your work-in-progress. I cannot sufficiently stress the importance of this latter point. This is a learn-by-doing
class, and as such the peer-review process is essential to learning and skill development.

Course Expectations
This class is structured as a student-centered, collaborative course. I see us as a community of scholars who are both teachers and learners at varying stages of development. As such, the class will be focused around the following learning tenets:

- Shared responsibility among all learners (both teachers and students) for constructing and making sense of knowledge within a community of practice;
- An appreciation of and support for multiple perspectives on knowledge and practice as well as opportunities to apply such understandings to relevant, open-ended, and realistic contexts;
- An emphasis on the critical role that peers play in the learning process, especially as it relates to helping one another decode, make meaning, and promote understanding of the subject.

I expect each of you to take an active role in your learning both inside and outside our virtual classroom. My hope is that you will not merely try to complete the readings and assignments for the sake of completion but that you will take the time to critically read course content, write assignments, and engage in forum discussions with your peers. Failure to participate or complete activities in a timely, professional manner will likely hinder your achievement of the objectives for this course.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be expected to:

- Have a working knowledge of evaluation and assessment philosophies, approaches, models, and uses;
- Understand the importance of evaluation and assessment in performing both formative and summative evaluations;
- Develop a range of evaluation instruments, including but not limited to surveys and interview/focus group protocols, to analyze and measure student learning and developmental outcomes;
- Have opportunities to practice and hone skills in designing, implementing, analyzing, and interpreting evaluation plans;
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan for the purposes of assessing policy or improving practice at the program, department, or institutional level;
- Translate findings from evaluation and assessment plans into practical implications that inform practice, policy, and institutional progress.
PART II: CLASS RESOURCES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATIONS

Email/Sakai

Sakai will be used as a source of continual updates about course material. You can expect that all emails to the instructor will be responded to within 48 hours (if not sooner), not including weekends.

Given the emphasis on email and Sakai communications, please make sure you:

- **Check your email** at least 3 times per week (more often is better).
- **Be patient.** Don’t expect an immediate response when sending a message. Generally, two days (not including weekends) is considered a reasonable amount of time to receive a reply.
- **Include “subject” headings** and use something that is descriptive and refers to a particular assignment or topic.
- **Be courteous and considerate.** Being honest and expressing yourself freely is important, but being considerate of others online is just as important as in the classroom.
- Make every effort to **be clear.** Online communication lacks the nonverbal cues that fill in much of the meaning in face-to-face communication.
- **Do not use all caps.** This makes the message hard to read and is considered “shouting.” Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation (you may want to compose in a word processor, then cut and past the message into the discussion or email).
- **Break up large blocks of text** into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.
- **Sign your messages.**

Note: When sending emails through the Sakai system, please make sure you check the “Send a copy of this message to recipient’s email address.”

**Required Texts** (Available at the Loyola University Bookstore)


In addition to this textbook, I have assigned a number of required readings that are available on the Sakai course website. While most readings should be immediately available, I may adapt some of the content for later sessions based on class needs. If this is the case, I’ll let you know ahead of time.

**Course Assignments**

You will be expected to complete the following assignments and activities:
a. Participation (15 points): This class is experientially based and as such, it is expected that each of you will actively participate in class discussions and exercises throughout the semester. This aspect of your course grade represents your individual performance and engagement in the course (as opposed to group-based assignments). Your participation grade will be based on the following:

- Your class attendance and punctuality;
- Your preparedness for class, including carefully reading the assigned materials and engaging in class discussions, exercises, and group activities;
- Your ongoing interaction with your project team members.

b. Preliminary manuscripts (30 points): Throughout the semester, each of you will work with a partner and be responsible for completing three manuscripts. These assignments are meant to be building blocks that address the various components of an evaluation plan and culminate in a final written report. While these assignments will be graded (10 points per manuscript), your ability to incorporate feedback and revise and edit your manuscripts accordingly will be a much stronger determinant of your final grade. In other words, this class emphasizes the formative nature of evaluation and your improvement on each of these important manuscripts will be taken into consideration when evaluating your final portfolio. However, late assignments or assignments that are incomplete, poorly written, or done in haste will be marked down accordingly.

Please use the following format to label each manuscript: [Last name author one, last name author two, MS 1, ELPS 431]. Omit the commas and brackets.

c. In-class poster presentation (15 points): Each group will be responsible for developing a poster presentation that illuminates the essential elements of your evaluation plan. The poster must include slides that illustrate each of the major content and methodological areas of your evaluation (more formal guidelines will be passed out later in the semester). Those not presenting at a given time will have an opportunity to examine the posters, ask questions of group members, and fill out comment cards that evaluate the quality of the poster as well as the knowledge and preparedness of the presenters. The slides should also be included as an appendix in the final report.

d. Final assignment (40 points): Each of you will submit a final written evaluation plan. While there is no minimum length of this report, it should reflect the cumulative work you have done throughout the semester and incorporate the feedback presented to you throughout the semester. The report should be submitted via the Sakai Assignment tab as a single PDF document. Please note that each student should also upload their final project onto LiveText (see section on dispositions below).

Please use the following format to label your file: [Last name author one, last name author two, final ELPS 431]. Omit the commas and brackets.
As this report constitutes a significant portion of your final grade, I expect it to be comprehensive, professionally prepared, and of the quality in which you would feel confident presenting this to your employer. For those of you who are working on an evaluation report specifically tied to your current position, I would encourage you to consider providing your employer with a copy and perhaps an “encore” performance of your earlier presentation. For those of you who have the opportunity to implement aspects of your evaluation plan (which is not an expectation of the course), I am happy to work with you on an individual basis so that you might incorporate real results in your final report.

Evaluation Procedures
The following criteria and procedures will be used to evaluate your work in this course to provide you with feedback and determine your course grade.

Evaluation Criteria:
- Evidence during class discussion and in written assignments that course readings have been completed on time and with thought;
- Effective use of relevant literature and its vocabulary and frameworks to support claims;
- Balanced and critical discussion of ideas and arguments, with particular attention to underlying values and assumptions;
- Original thinking that adds insight;
- Consistent, well-prepared class attendance and participation;
- On-time submission of assignments;
- Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation; concise writing (i.e., not wordy).

The most common problems that detract from grades on assignments are:
- Superficiality – Lack of adequate thought and substance, usually due to inadequate time spent on the assignment;
- Inattentiveness to instructions – Each assignment includes detailed instructions that should be read carefully before starting the project and reviewed again before submitting your work;
- Poor editing – particularly “typos” and grammatical errors
- Lateness – See policy below.

Note that all of these problems can be reduced by starting projects early, and the first two can be reduced by revising and asking others to review drafts.

Due Dates and Policy on Lateness and Absences
All assignments are due on the dates posted in this syllabus. Additionally, I have included an assignment timeline in Appendix A that incorporates the due dates for all of the labs and other course assignments. Late assignments may be penalized one half-grade for each late day (or portion of a day). To avoid a reduction in grade, students with emergency situations must contact me in advance of the class to negotiate an alternative due date.
GRADING:

1. Class Participation: 30 points
2. Preliminary manuscripts 1-3 (10 points each): 30 points
3. Final Evaluation Report: 40 points

Total points for an A: 94-100
Total points for an A-: 90-93
Total points for a B+: 87-89
Total points for a B: 84-86
Total points for a B-: 80-83
Total points for a C+: 77-79
Total points for a C: 74-76
Total points for a C-: 70-73

PART III: LUC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DISPOSITIONS

Conceptual Framework
A conceptual framework that emphasizes “Social Action through Education” guides instructional, extracurricular, and professional activities at Loyola’s School of Education. The Loyola School of Education faculty are dedicated to promoting professionalism in service of social justice by developing students’ knowledge, skills, ethics, and service to improve educational opportunities for all members of society.

This course houses a core assessment for the following Conceptual Framework Standard: Apply culturally responsive practices that engage diverse communities (CFS2)

Loyola’s School of Education is committed to the value of diversity in all of its courses. This course presents and encourages diverse perspectives on evaluation and assessment in higher education, as well as scholarship about how to design evaluation plans that serve diverse groups of stakeholders. In our examination of program evaluation strategies, we will always emphasize the ethics of conducting quantitative and qualitative research. We will also stress the evaluator’s responsibility to engage aspects such as access to technology, religion, gender, class, ability, race and ethnicity, student academic success, funding patterns, among others, that may play an important role in the design and implementation of evaluation research. This course addresses these issues and invites students to critically reflect on them for their own current and future professional practice in higher education.

Dispositions
The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago requires the assessment of all students across professional dispositions associated with their field in each class. All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: Professionalism, Fairness, and the Belief that All Students Can Learn..
Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise. The rubric in Appendix B reflects the dispositions outlined for the Higher Education program; you may also find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText (see below).

**LiveText**

All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: [LiveText](#).

**IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students**

Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: [http://luc.edu/idea/](http://luc.edu/idea/) and click on **STUDENT IDEA LOGIN** on the left hand side of the page.

The following IDEA learning objectives are considered essential for this course:

1. Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
2. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
3. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
4. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team

**Syllabus Addendum Link**

- [www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/](http://www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/)

This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting and electronic communication policies and guidelines. We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – **Social Action through Education**.
PART IV: COURSE OUTLINE

Course at A Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overview of Course, Goals, Objectives, and Expectations (PANOPTO)</td>
<td>Post introductions and responses on Forum by Sun. Sept. 4th at midnight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction to Program Evaluation</td>
<td>Email instructor the names of group members by Sunday Sept. 11th at midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Steps in Program Evaluation and Selecting an Evaluation Question</td>
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<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Logic Models, Learning Outcomes, and Engaging Stakeholders</td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group Consultations</td>
<td>Bring work in progress to class; MS1 due Sunday, October 2nd by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quasi-Experimental and Quantitative Research Design in Program Evaluation</td>
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<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mid-semester Break—No class</td>
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<td>Oct. 18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Using and Developing Surveys in Program Evaluation</td>
<td>Bring survey draft questions to workshop in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Descriptive &amp; Inferential Statistics in Evaluation Research</td>
<td>MS2 due Sunday Oct. 30th by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Qualitative Techniques in Evaluation Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(ASHE; PANOPTO) Protocol Development and Ethics</td>
<td>Upload protocol draft on Sakai Forum by usual class time; provide peer feedback by Sunday Nov. 13th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Qualitative Analytic Approaches in Evaluation Research</td>
<td>MS3 due Sunday, Nov. 20th by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mixed-Methods in Program Evaluation &amp; the Logistics of Evaluation Implementation</td>
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<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Final Workshop</td>
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<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 11</td>
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<td>Final due</td>
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Weekly Readings and Activities

Session 1: Overview of Course, Goals, Objectives, and Expectations

During the first week of the course, I will provide you with an overview of the course, expectations, assignments, and other pertinent information related to the nature of the course.

Virtual class on Panopto. Please post your introductions/responses on the Sakai Forum by Sunday, Sept. 4th at 11:59 CDT.
This week we begin our foray into the world of evaluation by contemplating the various definitions and approaches that have been used to make informed decisions about how well a particular program, policy, or unit is achieving its stated goals and objectives. We will examine different philosophical approaches to program evaluation, including the objective- and participant-oriented approaches, summative vs. formative evaluation.

Required Readings:
- Schuh, Preface and Chpt. 1
- Fitzpatrick et al., Chpt. 1

Due: Email instructor the names of group members by Sunday 11th at midnight.

This week we will also examine the overall evaluation process and the various steps involved in designing, implementing, and analyzing an evaluation plan. We will also examine the process of identifying an evaluation question that will ultimately drive your semester-long project.

Required Readings:
- Schuh, Chpt. 2
- Fitzpatrick et al. 13 (pp. 314-332)

This week we will examine the importance of logic models in delineating how resources and activities embedded within a particular program translate into short-term, intermediate, and long-term student outcomes. We will also discuss the primary audience (i.e., major stakeholders) of your evaluation plan and how the logic model is used to communicate key aspects of your evaluation plan to stakeholders who have an immediate, direct, or indirect claim on the results and recommendations that stem from the final evaluation plan.

Required Readings:
- Wholey et al., Chpts. 2 and 3
- Weiss, Chpt. 3
- Bresciani Handout
For this session, each group must bring their work in progress (at whatever stage you may be). We will troubleshoot in groups and work on your drafts in class.

MS1 due by Sunday, October 2\textsuperscript{nd} at midnight

This week we will focus on a review of quasi-experimentation and we will review the basic tenets of quantitative research design.

**Required Readings:**
- Creswell, Chpt. 8
- Schuh, Chpt. 3 (51-64); Chpt. 4 (77-87; 93-105);

This week we will examine the basic tenets of survey design as you begin the process of developing a survey instrument for your evaluation project. This discussion will highlight the important considerations and potential pitfalls of writing a valid and reliable survey instrument.

For this class each group must bring draft questions related to your survey instrument to receive peer/instructor feedback.

**Required Readings:**
- Schuh, Chpt. 5 (107-127)
- Wholey et al., Chpt. 12

This week we will examine the basic tenets of survey design as you begin the process of developing a survey instrument for your evaluation project. This discussion will highlight the important considerations and potential pitfalls of writing a valid and reliable survey instrument.

For this class each group must bring draft questions related to your survey instrument to receive peer/instructor feedback.

**Required Readings:**
- Schuh, Chpt. 5 (107-127)
- Wholey et al., Chpt. 12
This week we review elements of quantitative data analysis, with an emphasis on using statistical software to perform descriptive and basic inferential analyses on survey data. We will discuss the criteria evaluators should keep in mind when deciding on the most appropriate statistical techniques for a given project. We will also explore how to interpret findings and use graphical and other spatial devices to display survey results during our in-class lab.

**Required Readings:**
- Huck, Chpt. 2
- Schuh, Chpt. 6 (141-158)
- Wholey et al., Chpt. 20

MS2 due Sunday, Oct. 30th by midnight

**Session 10: Qualitative Techniques in Evaluation Research**

This week we will begin exploring the use of qualitative techniques, including interviews and focus groups, in answering evaluation questions that require a more nuanced and deeper understanding of why a particular process or outcome was derived from program participation. In addition, we will discuss the process of creating and writing an interview/focus group protocol.

**Required Readings:**
- Schuh, Chpt. 4 (87-93); Chpt. 5 (127-139);
- Wholey et al., Chpt. 17

**Session 11: Protocol Development and Ethics (Panopto lecture--ASHE)**

This week we will concentrate on developing protocols based on either interviews or focus groups used in program evaluation. We will also review some important requirements regarding ethics in the design and implementation of evaluation research.

Each group must upload draft questions related to your protocol instrument to Sakai; provide feedback to peers by Sunday

**Required Readings:**
- Schuh, Chpt. 8
- Review IRB example
- Review protocol examples

Upload draft protocol questions by usual class time; provide peer feedback by Sunday Nov. 13th at midnight.
Session 12: Qualitative Analytic Approaches in Evaluation Research

This week we will examine techniques used to analyze interview/focus group transcripts and ways to display findings from this portion of your analytic plan. We will also go over the requirements for completing the qualitative analytic section of your final evaluation plans.

Required Readings:
- Creswell, Chpt. 9
- Schuh, Chpt. 6 (158-170)

MS3 due Sunday, Nov. 20th by midnight

Session 13: Mixed-Methods in Program Evaluation & the Logistics of Evaluation Implementation

This week we will examine best practices in utilizing mixed-methods designs. Additionally, we will discuss standards, utility, and ethical considerations that undergird quality evaluation plans. Finally, we will briefly address how effectively create budgets, timelines, and other logistical aspects necessary to the evaluation process.

Required Readings:
- Creswell, Chpt. 10
- Schuh, Chpt. 9
- Pell Institute “Create a Budget”
- University of Wisconsin “Managing the Evaluation”

Session 14: Final Workshop

Come prepared with your work in progress and questions or issues to address. (The more targeted your questions, the more productive the session will be for each group.)

Session 15: Presentations

This week we will spend some time reflecting on your accomplishments and you will have the opportunity to share your final evaluation design with your peers.

Final project due at the end of the week on Sunday, Dec. 11th by midnight.
Appendix A: Checklist for the Final Evaluation Plan

1. The final evaluation plan should include two major areas:
   a. Final Narrative
   b. Appendices

2. The following are examples of what should be included in the narrative and appendices (Note: This is a comprehensive list and some items listed may not apply to your particular project).
   a. Narrative:
      i. Statement of the Problem
      ii. Significance of Problem
      iii. Context and History of the Program
      iv. Rich Description of the Program
      v. Stakeholders
      vi. Review of Literature/Conceptual Framework
      vii. Logic Model Description
      viii. Evaluation Approach
      ix. Evaluation Questions
      x. Quantitative Approach
      xi. Qualitative Approach
      xii. Limitations
      xiii. Timeline
      xiv. Budget
      xv. Next Steps
      xvi. References
   b. Appendices:
      i. Supporting Program Documents
      ii. Prior Evaluation Results/Instruments
      iii. Logic Model
      iv. Matrices and Heuristics
      v. Survey
      vi. Survey Construct Map
      vii. Protocols
      viii. Coding Rubric
      ix. Consent Forms
      x. Email invitations
      xi. Other

3. General Guidelines:
   a. This is a culminating portfolio of your work throughout the semester and the materials and documents should all be carefully proofread and edited.
   b. Make sure the narrative has appropriate transitions and that the text flows from one section to the next.
   c. Make sure you include an explanation in the narrative for any of the items in the appendices.
   d. I would recommend using section headers and/or tabs throughout the portfolio to organize your work.
   e. Make sure to upload your final plan to both the assignment tab in Sakai.
   f. For those of you who plan on administering aspects of your plan in the future, please know I am available for further consultation.
## Appendix B: Dispositions

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<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student demonstrates exceptional ability to work well with others, lead educational initiatives, and show leadership qualities in professional settings</td>
<td>Student demonstrates an ability to work well with others in a professional setting through exhibiting behaviors such as punctuality, meeting deadlines, and being open and responsive to feedback</td>
<td>Student fails to demonstrate professional behavior in the academic or work setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student meets all deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student attends class and is punctual for all professional obligations</td>
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<td>Student communicates promptly with faculty, supervisors, employers, and peers (no longer than 2 business days)</td>
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<td>Student is able to express himself or herself appropriately (verbally and in writing) with faculty, supervisors, employers, and peers</td>
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<td>Student is able to work effectively with peers on assignments</td>
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<td>Student demonstrates ethical behavior in all professional and graduate student work</td>
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<td>Student adequately addresses feedback provided on coursework (e.g., grammar, APA style, content)</td>
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<td>Student accurately cites material in academic work ascribing appropriate credit for information conveyed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Student demonstrates exceptional ability to understand the situations of others and responds in an appropriate, proactive manner</td>
<td>Student demonstrates ability to understand the situations of others and responds in an appropriate, proactive manner</td>
<td>Student fails to consider the situation of others in making professional decisions and acts inequitably</td>
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<td>Student is considerate (verbally and nonverbally) of appropriately expressed feelings and opinions of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student exhibits active listening skills</td>
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<td>Student is able to accept constructive feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students can learn</td>
<td>Student exhibits exemplary understanding and practice reflecting the belief that all students, regardless of contextual influences, are capable of learning</td>
<td>Student believes and demonstrates in practice that all students, regardless of contextual influences, are capable of learning</td>
<td>Student fails to understand and/or demonstrate in practice that all students, regardless of contextual influences, are capable of learning</td>
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<td>Student is sensitive to cultural differences</td>
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<td>Student respects the diversity of learning styles</td>
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<td>Student uses the framework of social justice in decision making</td>
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